

Subject: Lusitania medal

Minneapolis Institute of Arts

1928

[Minneapolis, MN]

THE MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

October 5, 1928

Dear Mr. Wood:

You may perhaps remember me as the person who collaborated with Arthur Wyman on the article on coins and collecting which appeared in the Saturday Evening Post. For the past year I have been connected with the museum here.

I come to you at present for some information. There is a resident here who possesses an example of the medal struck in Germany to commemorate the sinking of the Lusitania. He purchased it from the artist. He has since heard that these were called in immediately by the German government and that only a few copies are in existence. Can you give me any information on the subject which I might transmit to him? Probably the usual false alarm. But I should be grateful if you could tell me something about it.

Please give my kindest regards to Mr. Noe, who was here last winter.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Very truly yours,

Mr. Howland Wood,
Curator, Museum of the American
Numismatic Society,
Audobon Place,
New York City.

Harold R. Van Doren
Assistant to the Director.

8th October, 1928

Mr. Harold L. Van Doren,
The Minneapolis Institute of Arts,
Minneapolis, Minn.

Dear Sir:

Your German friend has the usual incorrect dope on the Lusitania medal. According to my information, which checks up pretty well with the facts, the first medals were cast with the wrong date, that is, May 5th. These were shortly changed to May 7th, the correct date. Therefore, the May 5th ones must have been made in limited quantities. These are scarce though not very rare. The May 7th ones are scarce simply because everybody wanted a specimen and very few now get on the market. I know of one dealer in Amsterdam who ordered, I think, 700 or 800 and sold them all. Presumably other dealers got them in small quantities as well. I have been given to understand that they were less known in a popular sense in Germany than out of Germany. Later on, when the Allied governments began to use these as propaganda and reversed the tables on the Germans, the German government did deny that many were made. Of course, they are not official medals and the government had no part in the making of them, but until the storm burst over their heads about them they apparently allowed them to be made.

Very truly yours,

Curator